

MONMOUTH-OCEAN COUNTY, N.J.
RANKS NO. 3 MOST LIVABLE IN
UNITED STATES

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 1997

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to report that a leading national business publication has discovered what I have known all my life—that the Monmouth-Ocean County area of New Jersey is one of the best places to live in the United States.

I would also like to note that Middlesex County, also in my district, is part of a region which moved from 83d to 29th in the national ranking.

I grew up in Long Branch, NJ, a city in historic Monmouth County, where right at my doorstep were the Atlantic Ocean, beautiful rivers and even a few lakes. New York City, with all of its cultural attractions and employment possibilities, was a 1-hour drive away. Locally, a light industrial economic base combined with a thriving tourist season resulted in the creation of many jobs for area families.

Monmouth County scored high on the criteria ranked as important by the readers of Money magazine which conducted the survey. These criteria included a low crime rate, excellent health care, and a clean environment. The high scores in these areas don't just happen by accident—they are the result of a great deal of hard work by the citizens of central Jersey over a period of many years.

I would like to include for the RECORD an article which appeared in the Asbury Park Press today which describes the Monmouth-Ocean County area and why it has earned the designation as the third most livable place in the United States.

The article follows:

[From the Asbury Park Press, June 12, 1997]

HAPPY? WE SHORE ARE!

(By Dennis P. Carmody)

If you want to live someplace better than Monmouth and Ocean counties, better pack your parka and trudge on up to Nashua, N.H., or Rochester, Minn.

At least that is what Money magazine concluded in the publication's annual survey of the best places to live.

In the survey released yesterday, Monmouth and Ocean counties placed higher than ever before, coming in third behind first-place Nashua and second-place Rochester. It came in first among metropolitan areas with a million or more residents.

"We're just elated!" said Pat Padula, tourism representative for Monmouth County. "I think this will make a great impact."

"It's great news and an independent evaluation of why we're all proud to call this area home," said John C. Bartlett Jr., director of the Ocean County Board of Freeholders.

The region's ranking has proved very volatile in the 11 years since the magazine started the list. Just two years ago Monmouth and Ocean counties fell to 167th place; the region's lowest mark ever. Last year it jumped to 38th place.

"Magazine come out with lists because lists sell magazines," cautioned Jack Preston, president of the Monmouth County Association of Realtors. Still, this ranking will lead some folks to take a second look at the area.

"You can be in the countryside here and five minutes later you're at the ocean,"

Preston said. "Two minutes after that you can be by a river."

Sue Tauriello, president of the Ocean County Association of Realtors, said she planned to make copies of the story to hand out to all her agents at her Dover Township office.

She said the good news would help counter some of the bad national impressions the area has received of late, such as the cancer scare in Dover Township and the murder of Kathleen Stanfield Weinstein, a schoolteacher abducted from a Dover shopping center.

Each year the magazine asks a cross-section of readers to rank 41 different factors that affect a town's quality of life, such as health care, sunny weather and nearby professional sports, said Richard Eisenberg, executive editor for Money.

The magazine's editors then weigh the nation's 300 largest metropolitan areas against those preferences to come up with its list. Changes in reader preferences, economic booms and busts and new sources of data sometimes lead to dramatic shifts in rank, Eisenberg said.

For example, while a low crime rate was considered the most important attribute for the second year in a row, health care issues rose in prominence in this year's survey, Eisenberg said.

That helped Monmouth and Ocean counties, home to 10 major hospitals, Eisenberg said.

The counties' low crime rate, about 65 percent below the national average, also helped, according to the magazine. So did the beaches and parks.

Monmouth and Ocean counties benefited from a new way of ranking the arts. For the first time, the two counties were considered close enough to New York that they could bask in its cultural glory, Eisenberg said.

The two counties lagged in transportation. About 40 percent of residents here work outside the two counties, and their average commute of 27 minutes was seventh-highest on the list, the magazine reported.

Monmouth and Ocean counties were not alone in their improvements. The seven other metropolitan regions in New Jersey all rose in the ranks too.

Central New Jersey, which includes Middlesex, Somerset and Hunterdon counties, saw its placing improve from 83rd to 29th, the magazine reported. Bergen and Passaic counties jumped further than any other area of the list rising 158 slots from 228th to 70th.

Mercer County had the second-highest jump, rising 139 slots from 265th to 126th. Northwest New Jersey, comprised of Essex, Morris, Sussex, Union and Warren counties, rose from 240th place to 136th.

Cumberland County rose from 223rd place to 166th while Atlantic and Cape May counties rose from 268th to 199th. Rounding out the state was Hudson County, which improved from 290th to 220th.

Improvement in the state's economy is a factor, said James W. Hughes, dean of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, New Brunswick.

"In the past year the gap between New Jersey and the rest of the country in both the unemployment rate and job growth has really started to close," Hughes said.

In April, New Jersey's unemployment rate was 5.2 percent, just 0.3 percent higher than the national average, according to the state Labor Department.

Monmouth County's jobless rate was even lower at 4.3 percent, while Ocean's tied with the state at 5.2 percent, according to the department.

The magazine's top 10 places were dominated by New Hampshire and Florida. After

Monmouth and Ocean counties, Punta Gorda, Fla., came in fourth, followed by the New Hampshire towns of Portsmouth and Manchester.

Last year's list-topper, Madison, Wis., came in seventh this year, followed by the highest-ranked large city on the list, San Jose, Calif. Jacksonville and Fort Walton Beach, Fla., rounded out the top 10.

Davenport, Iowa, took last place in this year's survey because of its high crime rate and poor economy.

INFORMATION ON MOST-FAVORED-NATION STATUS

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 1997

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the insight added to the policy debate on most-favored-nation [MFN] status for China by Rev. Robert A. Sirico in an article he authored in yesterday's Wall Street Journal. Reverend Sirico succinctly highlights the danger which occurs when "labor unions and other left-liberal protectionists" align themselves with those factions of the religious right who, at times, are "insensitive to the difference between urging certain moral ends and using government coercion to bring them about."

Reverend Sirico, a Paulist priest, explains that pleas from evangelical missionaries currently working in China have passionately urged United States policymakers not to cut off trade with China as this would endanger Christian's status in China as well as possibly lead to the Chinese Government revoking Christian's visas.

"Economic prosperity through free trade is the most effective distributor of wealth and power, and trade with China is the surest way to break the grip of centralized political power" according to Reverend Sirico who also finds the Chinese Government's treatment of Christians morally objectionable.

It is important, in evaluating United States policy toward the government of China, or any other sovereign foreign government, to differentiate between lowering trade barriers, as MFN status simply does, and United States taxpayer financing of foreign governments through various forms of foreign aid as well as engaging in corporate welfare through such agencies as the World Bank, OPIC, and the IMF. While lowering trade barriers necessarily results in greater economic well-being, foreign aid, and international corporate welfare programs are neither economically prudent nor constitutional. Additionally, misnamed multilateral agreements like NAFTA, or more honestly, government-regulated international trade does not constitute free trade and should be opposed on the same grounds of unconstitutionality and economical ineptness.

I commend the research of Reverend Sirico and thank him for his important contribution to the policy debate regarding most-favored-nation status and recommend a careful reading of his article by everyone genuinely interested in both the proper moral and economic resolution of this issue.

[From the Wall Street Journal, June 11, 1997]

CHINA AND THE TRADE WARRIORS

(By Robert A. Sirico)

Despite occasional tensions between social conservatives and economic conservatives,